DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 072 349 AC 014 191

TITLE	Communicating with "Neglected" Farmers on Regulatory Programs.
INSTITUTION	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	27 Jan 72
NOTE	8p.; APHS Seminar held at the National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Md., January 26-27, 1972
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Agricultural Education; *Communication Problems; Conference Reports; *Entomology; Extension Education; *Farmers; Information Dissemination; *Low Income Groups; Mass Media; *Minority Groups; Rural Farm Residents; Seminars

ABSTRACT

Workshop recommendations resulting from an Animal and Plant Health Service (APHS) Seminar on ways of reaching "neglected" farmers and enlisting their support for the APHS regulatory programs are provided. The "neglected" farmer is identified as those low-income/minority group marginal farmers who cannot be reached by ordinary means, e.g., poor farmers, uneducated farmers, Black or Mexican-American farmers, and farmers who get most of their income from non-farm jobs and may not consider themselves as farmers. These individuals are difficult to reach through the press, radio, or TV; don't become involved in Extension programs or farm organizations; and are often highly suspicious of Government and Government programs. The recommendations concern: (1) tailoring the message for rural low-income and ethnic groups; (2) selecting and using mass media; (3) selecting and using other means of communications, including person-to-person, community forums and organizations, direct mail, etc.; and (3) making information a part of day-to-day regulatory program operations. The seminar agenda and participants in the seven workshops are provided. (DB)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

ED 072349

COMMUNICATING WITH "NEGLECTED" FARMERS ON REGULATORY PROGRAMS[1/]

The regulatory programs we are talking about are those in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Service (APHS) concerned with controlling, containing, limiting the spread of, or eradicating certain plant pests and animal diseases.

Specifically, APHS Plant Protection Programs involve about 25 different insects and plant pests--ranging from giant African snail to the gypsy moth to citrus blackfly. Left unchecked, they could cause tremendous economic damage.

Animal Health Programs involve animal disease eradication and prevention of animal disease spread across State lines. Major eradication programs include brucellosis, hog cholera, cattle and sheep scabies and exotic Newcastle disease. In addition, Emergency Programs are aimed at eradicating such potentially costly and dangerous foreign animal diseases as foot-and-mouth disease, rinderpest and African swine fever.

All these programs have one thing in common: Their success depends to a large extent on public cooperation and support.

This is true of any program. But our regulatory programs--particularly those whose goal is eradication--need this support to a much greater degree. We must reach everyone if our programs are to operate most effectively and economically.

The APHS Information Division is responsible for supporting these regulatory programs by keeping the public informed about progress and what people can do to make the programs successful. Over the years we have developed the techniques and skills necessary to reach a large part of the public. We have been particularly effective in reaching those audiences in agriculture who read the farm press, who take farm magazines, who participate in Extension programs and who are active in farm organizations.

Who are the "neglected" farmers? This is a short-hand term for those low income/minority group marginal farmers who cannot be reached by ordinary means. Some examples: Poor farmers, uneducated farmers, Black or Mexican-American farmers, farmers who get most of their income from non-farm jobs--and may not even think of themselves as farmers. These individuals are difficult to reach through the press, radio or TV. They don't get involved in Extension programs or farm organizations. They are often highly suspicious of government and government programs.

Although their total agricultural production may be small, they can have a tremendous impact on our regulatory programs.

Because it takes only one: One individual who sees a giant African snail--and ignores it. One individual who observes that his pigs are sick--and markets them anyway. One individual who--through ignorance--neglects to vaccinate his horse for Venezuelan equine encephalomyelitis (VEE).

1/ APHS Seminar held at the National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Md., Jan. 26-27, 1972. See agenda, pp. 6-7, for program and list of participants.

AC014191

Each of these instances can, at the least, cause unnecessary difficulties; at the most disaster.

How can we get our message to these "neglected" farmers? As our workshop topics suggest, the solution does not lie with information alone. Rather, it will take a combination of information and program efforts. The purpose of our seminar is to look at this problem of communication from as many different angles as possible. Hopefully, the program will stimulate our thoughts in the workshops so that we can, through this combined effort, develop ways of reaching "neglected" farmers and enlisting their support for our regulatory programs.

- - - - -

WORKSHOP RECOMMENDATIONS:

Tailoring the message for rural low income and ethnic groups

1. The message should convey one idea.
   We don't have to tell the whole story every time.

2. Use simple language.
   --For example, a release issued in Texas on the hog cholera program referred to the number of herds "depopulated." The editor of one paper used the story, but added a parenthetical comment--("depopulated" means "shot").
   --But don't talk down to people.

3. Use the local language.
   For instance, in Spanish-speaking areas, the message should be in Spanish and in the kind of Spanish spoken in that locality. Local phrases and idiom should be used where possible.

4. Keep the special interests and values of the audience in mind when tailoring the message.
   Often these are different than our own.

5. The message should motivate--it should speak to the needs of the people, rather than to the needs of a Government Program.

6. Use local people--who know the language, values and needs of the people--to help design the message.

7. Other ideas:
   --entertain, if possible
   --use cartoons, line drawings
   --use meaningful photographs the audience can relate to
   --use simple, colorfully illustrated items
   --reach children through comics

Selecting and using mass media

1. In any mass program, we have to use all mass media: TV, radio, newspapers, magazines.
   Although we may miss many "neglected" farmers, there will be some spillover through word-of-mouth from those who do get the message through the media.

2. Survey the local situation to find out what specific radio stations or programs, newspapers, etc. reach the group we're aiming at.
   --We should use field personnel to help identify the best outlets for information materials (don't overlook consultive help from non-agriculture field people).
   --We should seek tie-in opportunities to put our message into popular radio programs, local columns, local personalities and shows.

3. We need to reduce the large volume of routine material we issue to mass media.
   Perhaps we should use a "rifle" rather than a "shotgun" approach. Our material is more apt to be used if we concentrate on a specific message to key media with a cover note pointing out the significance of the message to the audience.

4. Rewrite general audience press releases for the ethnic press.
   For instance, such rewritten releases for the Black press on the boll weevil program should emphasize how it will affect Black farmers.

Selecting and using other means of communications, including person-to-person, community forums and organization, direct mail, etc.

1. The 1:to:1 approach is the most effective means--though costly--of reaching neglected farmers.

2. The most effective people to use this approach to carry our message to neglected farmers are the opinion leaders in the community.
   --Some are easily recognizable: The county agent, preacher, etc.
   --Others are "submerged" leaders or "gatekeepers" (a "gatekeeper" is defined as a local resident who is recognized as knowledgeable by the people in the area): The bootlegger or country storekeeper.
   --We need to identify these individuals and get their cooperation:
      * Some are already identified and are being used in other programs. For instance, the leader aides or program aides in some Extension and OEO programs.
      * Perhaps, through the Rural Community Assistance Consortium, we could use the 1890 schools (the 15 predominately Black land-grant colleges and Tuskegee Institute) in projects in some areas to identify these "gatekeepers" or "submerged" leaders.

3. We need to involve these "gatekeepers" or "submerged" leaders in county committees on animal and plant health programs--along with other community leaders--to "legitimize" our programs.

4. Programs involving demonstrations for neglected farmers should be held on small farms (rather than large, well-equipped ones) so that neglected farmers can identify with and be more interested in such programs.

   Neglected farmers may not attend demonstrations because of transportation problems--consider furnishing transportation.

5. Outlets for such information materials as posters, flyers, brochures, envelope stuffers, etc. included:

   County agents
   4-H and Vo-Ag organizations
   Other youth:
      --work through schools (4th, 5th or 6th grades or lower) to reach parents
      --use science study aids for some programs
   Farm organizations--Farm Bureau, Grange, NFO, etc.
   Other government agencies--ASCS, SCS, OEO, Welfare, FHA
   Feed mills, country stores
   Churches
   Banks
   Barber shops
   Social clubs
   Local pubs
   Labor unions

6. We must rely on field personnel to use these outlets, both with material produced in Washington and with material produced in Washington that can be adapted and changed for local use by field people.

   Field personnel <u>won't</u> do this unless convinced that it will have long-range beneficial effects on their individual workloads and programs. They must be given rewards and recognition for field information jobs that are well done.

<u>Making information a part of day-to-day regulatory program operations</u>

1. Make every person within the organization a salesman; that is, a communicator, an information specialist in his own right.

   This requires the backing and encouragement of the top staff and administrators. Also, to be good "salesmen," there must be high morale; field people must <u>believe</u> in their programs. We must use two-way communication to give field people a voice in the organization.

2. Next, furnish field people with attractive and effective visual aids, handout materials, radio and TV spot announcements, and other items that they can use to help explain their programs.

3. Finally, train field people on how to use information tools and techniques:
   --Hold workshops and training sessions on information.
   --Teach field people how to find and use the "gatekeepers" in their area.

4. Use local people in our programs wherever feasible.
   --Hire local workers who can identify with the neglected farmers we're trying to reach.
   --Train them not only in their job, but also in what we want them to communicate about this job while they are carrying it out.
   --Since neglected farmers would not necessarily look on USDA people as persons concerned with their welfare--but rather as the Establishment--we need local "aides" to bridge this "believability" gap. But we should not have permanent "aides," because in time they, too, would become part of the Establishment. So we need a permanent system--without permanent people.

5. Information people should be involved in all stages and levels of program planning--in the preliminaries as well as when the program is initiated and underway.
   For instance, information people should attend all staff meetings so they can be kept fully aware of future program developments. Thus, they can plan for effective communications to neglected farmers as well as to other audiences. (The cost/benefit ratio must be studied on reaching various audiences for different programs. Also, the need for contacting these audiences varies from area to area within each program.)

6. Some specific suggestions:
   --One group operated as a grid session on the hog cholera situation in the lower Rio Grande Valley. They suggested using the OEO network of people there (outreach workers) as guides or interpreters for livestock inspectors. These people would have the confidence of and know the local people and could probably do a more effective and better job than we could do on our own in trying to seek out these people who have hogs.
   --Another workshop proposed a pilot project in communicating with neglected farmers. This would be in a selected area using a routine rather than an emergency program. The area would be surveyed to determine the avenues of communication. These avenues could be used, their effectiveness tested, and changes made on the basis of feedback information.

7. To sum up:
   "The information program should be a comprehensive, deliberate strategy and should be interwoven into the regulatory program."

   Put in plain talk:
   "You've got to tell folks what you're doing. How can they help if you don't let them know what's going on? You've got to say what you mean and mean what you say. Plain talk. Not fancy. And telling people has to be part of the whole works."

SEMINAR AGENDA

Wednesday, January 26, 1972

1:00 p.m. Opening Remarks--Larry Mark, Inf. Officer, APHS Information Div.

1:10 p.m. Survey on Communication--E. A. Delco, Jr., Dean, Huston-Tillotson College, Austin, Tex.

1:25 p.m. Panel Discussion: "How Extension Reaches the 'Neglected' Farmer"
- Moderator: Leighton Watson, Director, Inf. & Educational Technology, West Virginia Univ., Morgantown, W. Va.
- North Carolina Projects: Bill Carpenter, Editor & Head, Dept. of of Agri. Inf., N.C. State Univ., Raleigh, N.C.
- Operation Porkchop: Dick Lee, Agricultural Editor, Univ. of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.
- Alabama's Grassroots Approach: John Parrott, Agricultural Editor, Auburn Univ., Auburn, Ala.

1:55 p.m. How a Morman Missionary Gets His Message Across: John Ellingson, Admin. Asst., APHS Animal Health Programs, Salt Lake City, Utah

2:10 p.m. Panel Discussion: "Other Agencies' Programs and Delivery Systems for 'Neglected' Farmers"
- Ira Kaye, Chief, Community Development Branch, Office of Economic Opportunity
- Mrs. Shami Lubin, Public Inf. Spec., Office of Congressional & Public Affairs, Office of Economic Opportunity
- Ozias Pearson, Director, Rural Community Assistance Consortium, Atlanta, Ga.
- Willis A. Selden, Chief of Communications, Community Relations Service, Department of Justice

3:00 p.m. Split into assigned workshops (each of cross section of backgrounds and disciplines) to make recommendations on <u>all</u> of these topics:
1. Tailoring the message for rural low income and ethnic groups
2. Selecting and using mass media
3. Selecting and using other means of communications, including person-to-person, community forums and organizations, direct mail, etc.
4. Making information a part of day-to-day regulatory program operations

Thursday, January 27, 1972

9:00 a.m. Reconvene in workshops to continue discussions

11:00 a.m. Workshop reports by chairmen

12:30 p.m. Adjourn

- - - - -

Workshop #1: Chairman--G. O. Schubert, APHS Animal Health Programs
Recorder--King Lovinger, APHS Information Division
Ed Thomas, APHS Plant Protection Programs
F. M. Philips, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Bob Rathbone, ARS Information Division
E. A. Delco, Jr., Huston-Tillotson College, Austin, Tex.
Bill Hutchinson, APHS Information Division
Dick Lee, Extension Editor, Columbia, Mo.

Workshop #2: Chairman--Joe Spears, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Recorder--Steve Kimbel, APHS Information Division
L. A. Hill, APHS Animal Health Programs
Bill Dalton, APHS Information Division
Walter John, Information Services, Extension Service
Jim Rosse, Livestock Conservation, Inc., Omaha, Nebr.
Ira Kaye, Community Development, OEO
Mrs. Eunice Walker, APHS Information Division

Workshop #3: Chairman--Grant Blake, APHS Information Division
Recorder--Bob King, APHS Information Division
Don Shepherd, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Earl McMunn, Ohio Farmer magazine, Columbus, Ohio
Leighton Watson, Extension Editor, Morgantown, W. Va.
John Ellingson, APHS Animal Health Programs, Salt Lake City, Utah

Workshop #4: Chairman--R. L. Cowden, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Recorder--Sid Moore, APHS Information Division
L. R. Barnes, APHS Animal Health Programs, Indianapolis, Ind.
A. F. Ranney, APHS Animal Health Programs
Ovid Bay, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Extension Service
Ozias Pearson, Rural Community Assistance Consortium, Atlanta, Ga.
Larry Mark, APHS Information Division
Joel Soobitsky, Program Development, Extension Service

Workshop #5: Chairman--M. J. Tillery, APHS Animal Health Programs
Recorder--Mrs. Susan Hess, APHS Information Division
Homer Autry, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Murray Pender, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Mrs. Virginia Mewis, APHS Information Division
John Parrott, Extension Editor, Auburn, Ala.
G. T. Mainwaring, APHS Animal Health Programs, Harrisburg, Pa.
Bob Enlow, ARS Information Division

Workshop #6: Chairman--John Riss, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Recorder--Howard Obenchain, APHS Information Division
R. L. Pyles, APHS Animal Health Programs, Columbia, Mo.
Marty Clark, APHS Information Division
E. E. Saulmon, APHS Veterinary Services
Willis A. Selden, Community Relations Service, Dept. of Justice
Ted Crane, USDA Office of Information
John Walker, APHS Animal Health Programs

Workshop #7: Chairman--R. E. Omohundro, APHS Emergency Programs
Recorder--Mrs. Betty Bollt, APHS Information Division
Tom McIntyre, APHS Plant Protection Programs
Dale May, Information Division, Consumer & Marketing Service
Leo G. K. Iverson, APHS Plant Protection & Quarantine Programs
Bill Carpenter, Extension Editor, Raleigh, N.C.
John Arnold, APHS Information Division
George Cavin, APHS Plant Protection Programs

ERIC Clearinghouse
MAR 14 1973
on Adult Education

Prepared by:

Information Division
Animal and Plant Health Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

ERIC Clearinghouse
MAR 14 1973
on Adult Education